

## Isle Drive Extension Project Update – March 16, 2015

The City of Baxter is preparing for the construction of Isle Drive from where it currently ends at the Essentia Health property to south of CSAH 48 on Ironwood Drive. The project will include a new roundabout at the CSAH 48 intersection, street and utility construction as well as new street lighting and pedestrian facilities on the east side of Isle Drive. The original project schedule anticipated a construction start in May or June of 2015. However, in order to facilitate possible impacts to the northern long-eared bat, clearing of the project area has been accelerated.

The northern long-eared bat is currently proposed to be listed as Endangered under the Federal Endangered Species Act. This proposed listing primarily comes in response to the growing threat that the disease white-nose syndrome has placed on the species. At this time, all 87 Minnesota counties are currently considered to contain potential habitat for the bat.

As a result of the proposed listing, the US Fish and Wildlife Service recommend that adverse impacts to the species or their habitat be avoided. In order to avoid impact to the bat, it is recommended that forested habitat be removed between the months of October and March (when bats are not roosting in the trees).

In order to minimize the impact to the northern long-eared bat, clearing for the Isle Drive extension project must be completed by the end of March 2015. The area will then be grubbed with the improvement project contract to begin in late May or early June of 2015.

Pratt's affordable Excavating was the low bidder and will be completing the clearing work in the Isle Drive corridor. They are planning to begin clearing trees south of CSAH 48 on Monday, March 16 and will continue north through the project all the way to Essentia Health Clinic on Isle Drive. Clearing limit stakes have been placed along the corridor. **During the clearing operations the DNR Paul Bunyan State Trail will be periodically closed. This will include a few days this week for cutting operations and a few days next week for chipping operations.**

If you have any questions regarding the Isle Drive project, please contact Project Inspector Mark Skogen at 218-821-3940, Project Engineer Chuck Rickart at 612-360-1283, [crickart@wsbeng.com](mailto:crickart@wsbeng.com) or City Engineer Trevor Walter at 218-454-5110. [twalter@baxtermn.gov](mailto:twalter@baxtermn.gov).